

GRAY WOLF TRAIL CREW NOTES

1/26/24

Location: Pyramid Peak, ONP

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles

Estimated On-Trail Volunteer Hours: 11

Report written by Rebecca.

Objective: Clear all downed logs from the trailhead to the slide (1.75 miles).

Metrics: (13) trees cleared over 1.75 miles. No tread work on this day.

The GWTC worked this trail last month, but I had scheduled another work crew for tomorrow (Saturday, Jan 27, see the next crew summary after this one) and some trees had fallen again since we were there last. Given that another logout was not supposed to be Saturday's focus, and that one of the projects was reputed to be a jackstraw (a jumble of trees like pick up sticks – those tend to take longer), we decided to do an extra work day just to re-clear the trail. It's a good thing we did because that jackstraw, which was just under ¼ mile from the trailhead, took us two hours to clear it slowly and carefully.



One large tree came down (the one on top with the scar on it) and brought lots of other trees down with it. Mostly small or at least smaller than the large one, but it was all piled together and jumbled up. In all there were 7 trees here ranging from the largest ones (20 and 18 inch diameter) down to very small and lots of branches and tree chunks.



With jackstraws, the key is to plan your order of cuts and move methodically through the mess, communicating and changing the plan as you uncover things and can see the situation better. Left picture: we've started the clean up process. Right picture: I went up on the hillside to get rid of a cedar that was bowed over the two main trees. The reason for the steep angle that I'm using is because I knew the butt end of the tree was going to want to come back towards me before it slid down. The cut angle gave the tree room to move the way it wanted to go while keeping my body entirely out of the way.



Left: Much more cleanup has happened and now Martin is doing the offside cut on one of the main trees.

Right: I had already done the release cut on the 18" tree and was now slicing it up into manageable sized chunks. In this picture I'm putting in an undercut before sawing straight down from the top, done to make sure the round drops cleanly.



Left: Martin starting the last tree of this project.

Right: cut plan went perfectly, then we just had to chunk it up into smaller rounds that we could toss off the trail.



Cleared! We knew tomorrow's crew would make this spot pretty again, so we left it like this.

After that project, we then proceeded up trail to the slide, cutting 6 more items, nothing very challenging or even very interesting.



Our next job was to check out the safety of the slide crossing for tomorrow's crew. Because of the latest freeze / thaw, we were concerned the rocks and pebbles on the slide might be loose and moving (we had read in a trip report about an accident / injury in this location in the week prior). Therefore, we put down the tools and went to the slide to watch it for a half-hour. Yes, it was a little boring. However, it was what we needed to do to ensure the safety of the crew who would go past the slide tomorrow. In a half-hour of watching, plus Martin went across and back on the slide, it was perfectly still and quiet. So, we deemed it fine, but decided that we'd re-assess tomorrow before heading across.